

Message Text

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FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM THE ACTING SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, US

SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT

1. THE PRESIDENT WAS INTERVIEWED BY A GROUP OF EDITORS AND NEWS DIRECTORS YESTERDAY, APRIL 15. THE TRANSCRIPT, WHICH WAS RELEASED BY THE WHITE HOUSE AT 3:00PM TODAY, CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RE AFRICA:

QUOTE:

QUESTION: MR. PRESIDENT, I AM VINCE SANDERS FROM THE NATIONAL BLACK NETWORK, AND I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF YOUR ADMINISTRATION HAS GOT TO THE POINT WHERE IT HAS DEVELOPED A POLICY TOWARD AFRICA, THAT GIVES YOU A COURSE OF ACTION RATHER THAN REACTION TO TROUBLE SPOTS LIKE ZAIRE AND RHODESIA. DO YOU HAVE A DEFINITIVE POLICY TOWARD AFRICA AS OF YET?

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THE PRESIDENT: WE ARE EVOLVING ONE. I HAVE SPENT AN AWFUL LOT OF TIME ON THE AFRICAN QUESTION. I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANNOUNCED THIS PREVIOUSLY IS THE REASON I AM HESITATING, BUT I HAVE ASKED THE VICE PRESIDENT TO PARTICULARLY CONCENTRATE ON THE AFRICAN QUESTION.

HE HAS BEEN DOING A LOT OF DETAILED ANALYSIS OF EACH

COUNTRY, ITS HISTORY, BACKGROUND, LEADERSHIP, AND HOW IT RELATES TO ITS NEIGHBORS, AND SO FORTH. I MEET WITH HIM FREQUENTLY. WE HAD A MEETING, JUST BEFORE LUNCH, ON AFRICA.

I THINK THAT WE DO HAVE A GOOD POLICY EVOLVING. WE HAVE DELIBERATELY DECIDED AS PART OF THAT POLICY, THOUGH, TO LET THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT RETAIN THE LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR THE TIME BEING.

ON DAVID OWEN'S PRESENT TRIP, THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF BRITAIN, WE AUTHORIZED HIM TO SAY THAT WE BACKED HIS PROPOSALS AND THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A GENEVA CONFERENCE, IF ONE CAN BE CALLED.

THERE ARE THREE INTERRELATED ITEMS, AS YOU KNOW. ONE IS WHAT TO DO WITH RHODESIA. WE THINK THE SMITH GOVERNMENT SHOULD STEP DOWN VERY SHORTLY AND PERMIT MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. MY OWN PREFERENCE IS THAT THE PEOPLE OF THAT COUNTRY HAVE A RIGHT TO VOTE ON WHO THEIR LEADER SHOULD BE.

OBVIOUSLY, THE ONLY COUNTRY OUTSIDE OF RHODESIA WHICH HAS A MAJOR INFLUENCE ON THE SMITH GOVERNMENT IS SOUTH AFRICA. AND WE ARE MAINTAINING COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN LEADERSHIP. THE SECOND QUESTION, WHICH IS RELATED, IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT NAMIBIA OR SOUTHWEST AFRICA.

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HERE WE AGAIN FAVOR MAJORITY RULE IN NAMIBIA. THE UNITED NATIONS HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY HERE AS DO THE BRITISH IN RHODESIA. WE HAVE ENCOURAGED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO MOVE EXPEDITIOUSLY IN RELEASING THAT COUNTRY TO ITS OWN LEADERSHIP.

OF COURSE, IN SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH HAS A LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT, WHAT WE NEED THERE OF COURSE IS TO PURSUE OUR OWN COMMITMENT OF THE ENDING OF APARTHEID AND MOVE EVENTUALLY TOWARD MAJORITY RULE.

THE DIFFICULT QUESTION IS, YOU KNOW, HOW MUCH TO PUSH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND DRIVE THEM INTO A CORNER THAT ALIENATES THEM FROM US BECAUSE TO A MAJOR DEGREE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS A STABILIZING INFLUENCE IN THE SOUTHERN PART OF THAT CONTINENT AND THEY HAVE A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY IN THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA.

SO I THINK WE DO HAVE AN EVOLVING POLICY TOWARD SOUTH

AFRICA. DAVID OWEN WILL BE BACK FROM HIS TOUR HAVING MET WITH MANY OF THE AFRICAN LEADERS, BOTH BLACK AND WHITE. ON THE 18TH OF THIS MONTH, WHICH I THINK IS MONDAY, HE WILL MAKE HIS REPORT TO THE BRITISH CABINET AND THEN MAKE HIS REPORT TO US AS WELL. WE GET DAILY COMMUNIQUES FROM FOREIGN MINISTER OWEN ON THIS TRIP.

QUESTION: THE KISSINGER PLAN, IT MAKES PROVISIONS FOR THE WHITES WHO ARE THERE IN RHODESIA. AND MY FEELING IS THAT IAN SMITH, WITH THE KIND OF CONTROL THAT HE IS RETAINING NOW, HE COULD MORE OR LESS IMPLEMENT A PEACEFUL TRANSITION THAT WILL ALSO PROVIDE SOME REPARATIONS FOR THE BLACKS WHO ARE GOING TO BE DISPLACED.

I THINK THE QUESTION IS, WILL THE KISSINGER PLAN BE FIGURED IN A NEW CONFERENCE THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL SPONSOR?

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THE PRESIDENT: CERTAIN COMPONENT PARTS OF IT. AS YOU KNOW, ONE OF THE MAJOR QUESTIONS IS WHO IS GOING TO CONTROL THE ARMY OR THE MILITARY FORCE THAT EXISTS IN RHODESIA? I THINK THAT IN THE PAST WHEN A SO-CALLED RESERVE FUND WAS SET UP TO COMPENSATE WHITE FAMILIES AND OTHERS WHO DECIDED TO LEAVE, THE RESERVE FUNDS HAVE NOT BEEN USED IN KENYA AND SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. THESE KINDS OF RESERVES HAVE BEEN VOLUNTARILY CONTRIBUTED BY NATIONS. THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN USED BECAUSE IN THE HISTORY OF THOSE COUNTRIES -- IT MAY BE COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IN RHODESIA, OF COURSE -- THE LAND WAS SIMPLY TRANSFERRED THROUGH ROUTINE, OPEN MARKET MEANS.

SO THE FACT THAT KISSINGER DID AGREE, I THINK WITH SUBSTANTIAL CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, TO CONTRIBUTE TO A FUND TO COMPENSATE WHITE LAND OWNERS AND OTHERS, DOESN'T MEAN THAT WE ARE PUTTING THAT MUCH MONEY OUT FOR GOOD. IT MEANS WE AGREED BACK THERE TO CONTRIBUTE OUR PART TO A FUND THAT MAY OR MAY NOT BE USED. IT IS EXTREMELY COMPLICATED AND WE COULD TALK FOR HOURS ABOUT IT.

QUESTION: ON THE SAME SUBJECT OF AFRICA, DO YOU AGREE WITH ANDY YOUNG THAT THE CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IS A STABILIZING INFLUENCE?

THE PRESIDENT: I HAVE CALLED PUBLICLY FOR THE CUBAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM AFRICA. I READ THE WHOLE TEXT OF COURSE OF ANDY'S STATEMENT AND WHAT HE SAID, I DO AGREE WITH IT. IT OBVIOUSLY STABILIZED THE

SITUATION. AND I THINK THE PRESENT ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT
UNDER NETO IS LIKELY TO STAY IN POWER. THE CUBANS OUGHT
TO WITHDRAW THEIR FORCES FROM AFRICA.

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END QUOTE.
CHRISTOPHER

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